

Multicultural Education: Components and Necessities

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Abstract

The educational systems of different countries have committed to addressing/respond to the existing racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural variations. Multicultural education is an approach adopted to respond to cultural diversity in society. This paper aims at analyzing the concept of multicultural education and identifies its components and necessities in so doing, the author employed qualitative and content analysis. To collect the required information, all available sources of multicultural education in print and electronic libraries (valid databases) were used and were analyzed using the inductive category. The findings of this research, along with specifying the concept of multicultural education, also showed that attention to multicultural curriculum, in the global and national situations is an inevitable necessity. At the end of the study, the components and needs of multicultural education were identified. In short, acceptance of diversity and plurality, peaceful coexistence respect to educational justice, flexibility in educational programmes, variety in methods, variety in using educational materials, using a variety of evaluation methods, training of human resources, who promote and strengthen the differences, the human tendency to create social trends rather than a specific, positive attitude to different cultures, helping to develop a positive self-concept, to protection of minority languages, strengthening intercultural cross-cultural communication and so on can be ways to ensure multicultural education.

Key Words: multicultural education, integration, approaches, perspectives, components.

Introduction

The worldwide migration and globalization have resulted in increment and the cognition of diversity in countries around the world within the last two decades (Banks, 2004; Banks, 2009). Racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious difference among nations or human beings, which forms the diversity, brings demographic, social, and economic changes at present. This makes it crucial for education to provide learners with opportunities and competences to reflect and share their own perspectives

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within a global interconnected society, as well as to understand and discuss complex relationships of common social, ecological, political and economic issues so as to derive new ways of thinking and acting. This trend has facilitated the development of education in a democratic and diverse way. It has implications for teaching and learning in schools, and it also provides both opportunities and challenges.

Nepal is a multiethnic, multi-religious, multicultural and multilingual federal republican country, currently divided into seven provinces. This is mainly is unfold from the perspective of cultural diversity in terms of religion and the language. So existence of groups and “cultural areas” in our country which are recognizable based on religious and linguistic distinctions is undeniable, and diversity in language, lifestyle, customs and traditions are easily visible (Mehraby, Younesi,2008). Education is one of the social institutions, which is undergoing through different scientific, cultural and political change. The system of education should make its position clear in the ongoing changes. Due to the changes in the scope of information and communications, new theories, such as postmodernism, feminism, pluralism, and globalization have been developed. One of the important theories in the context of education is theory of cultural pluralism. Preservation of linguistic and cultural identities of nations has been one of the most important social and political issues of the globalized world at present.

There is prevalence of ethnic and cultural diversity in our country that implies the need for multicultural education. In some places, there is still practice of single, dominant monocultural and monolingual education in the context of globalization, and socio-political and economical development of Nepal and its surrounding. Multicultural education can prepare individuals and groups to live peacefully in a multicultural society. The existence of a variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, customs and languages in Nepal implies that it is a multicultural society/country. Therefore, there is an urgent need of the establishment of a multicultural education. In this context the researcher is curious to explore how the system of education can address the needs of multicultural society. More specifically, this paper aims at shading light on the concept of multicultural education, in terms of its components and necessity.

The author attempted to answer the following research questions;

- What is multicultural education?
- What are the components of multicultural education?
- What are the requirements for multicultural education in educational system of Nepal?

Research Methodology

The research method employed in this study was largely qualitative. The author also used content analysis to collect and analyze information. All available sources of multicultural education in print and electronic libraries were use. The information was analyzed using the inductive category. To achieve this, the texts associated with the main objective were selected in the first stage, and research questions related to the concepts were extracted in the second phase. In the third stage, codes extracted in both categories are discussed. Finally,the concept, name and title are analyzed.

Results and Discussion

The results have been discussed under different headings corresponding to the research questions.

Concept of Multicultural Education:In this section meaning and definition, objectives, and theoretical approaches of multicultural education corresponding to first research question have been discussed.

Meaning and definition of multicultural education: Within the Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (Banks & Banks, 1995 p. xii) multicultural education is defined as“a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women’s studies”. It has become a popular term in education whose meaning is varied yet “as a reform movement, [it] has been described as shifting the meanings of equality away from the emphasis on hierarchy and belonging, toward highlighting inclusion and community” (Appelbaum, 2002, p. 22).The definition of multicultural education (MCE) is very broad and diverse and also had different meanings at different times. In the following table the meaning of MCE are shown succinctly.

Authors/Date	Term
Jacob & Jordan, 1987	Cultural compatibility
Erickson, 1987	Culturally responsiveness
Barnhardt, 1990	Teaching through culture
Ladson-Billings, 1990	Cultural relevance
Au & Kawakami ,1994	Culturally congruence
Phuntsog, 1999	Cultural diversity
Gay, 2003	Multicultural education
Banks & Banks, 2004	Multicultural education
Gonzalez et al., 2005	Cultural sensitivity
Holliday, 2010	Cultural sensitivity
Paris , 2012	Culturally sustaining

According to Banks (2004), MLE has emerged in diverse courses, programmes, and practices that educational institutions have devised to respond to the demand, needs, and aspirations of the various groups. Consequently, as Grant and Sleeter (1987) pointed out; MCE is not in actual practice one identifiable course or educational programme. Rather, practicing educators use the term MCE to describe a wide variety of programmes and practices related to making education more inclusive (or characterized by ‘equity’) in terms of ethnicity, language, gender, class and disabilities. MCE has developed rapidly and should undertake a new mission in the globalized era. In the perspective of globalization, MCE must aim at developing students’ ability to adapt to a multicultural world. It should promote a combined growth of culture and world peace (Chen, 2005). There number of individuals and groups involved in MCE movement or research are over increasing. However, comparisons between the various approaches to MCE in different countries are hampered by a lack of conceptual clarity, by differences in social context and by different views on cultural diversity (Banks & Banks, 2010). In this paper, the author has listed more point of views in order to discuss touch upon some of the issues. The following table highlights the common characteristics of MCE found in the definitions provided by individual researchers.

Researchers	Foundational Themes
Gay(1994)	The policies, programs, and practices employed in schools to celebrate cultural diversity . It builds on the assumption that teaching and learning are invariably cultural processes(p.3).
Grant (1994)	It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality ... in the United States. Multicultural education does this by providing knowledge about the history, culture, and contributions of the diverse groups that have shaped the history, politics, and culture of the United States....It confronts social issues involving race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender.... It encourages student investigations of world and national events and how these events affect their lives (p. 31).
Nieto (2000)	A process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect(p. 305).
Gay(2004)	A set of beliefs and explanations that recognize and values the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping lifestyles; social experiences; personal identities; and educational opportunities for individuals, groups, and nations (p.33).
Banks (2006)	A way of viewing reality and a way of thinking, and not just content about various ethnic, racial, and cultural groups (p. 8). ...to respond to the concerns of ethnic, racial, cultural, and language groups that feel marginalized within their nation states (p.23). To help students learn how to function more effectively within their owncommunity culture, within other cultural communities , within the national culture , and withthe global community (p.121).
Bige-low(2009)	Attempts to uncover the histories and experiences of people who have been left out [marginalized] of the curriculum (p.54).
Lee (2009)	Equips students, parents and teachers with the tools needed to combat racism and ethnic discrimination , and to find ways to build a society that includes all people on an equal footing (p.10).
Sleeter and McLaren (2009)	MCE frames inequality in terms of institutionalized oppression and reconfigures the families, and communities of oppressed groups as sources of strength (p.18).

Note. The bold terms show common foundational themes of multicultural education.

By discussing different literature mentioned above, it can be concluded that MCE refers to any form of education or teaching that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds. At the classroom level, for example, teachers may modify or incorporate lessons to reflect the cultural diversity of the students in a particular class. In many cases, “culture” is defined in the broadest possible sense, encompassing race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, and “exceptionality”—a term applied to students with specialized needs or disabilities. Generally speaking, MCE is predicated on the principle of educational equity for all students, regardless of culture, and it strives to remove barriers to educational opportunities and success for students from different cultural backgrounds. Instructionally, MCE may entail the use of texts, materials, references, and historical examples that are understandable to students from different cultural backgrounds or that reflect their particular cultural experience.

Objectives of MCE. Banks (2006) states that “one major goal of multi-cultural education is to help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate effectively in their cultural communities and within the civic culture of the nation-state” (p. xvii). While multicultural education is multidimensional, according to Banks (2008), its basic purpose is to restructure schools so that all students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to function in a culturally diverse society.

Howard (2006) synthesized the life supporting goals of multicultural education into five key arenas of learning: (1) to know who we are racially and culturally; (2) to learn about and value cultures different from our own; (3) to view social reality through the lens of multiple perspectives; (4) to understand the history and dynamics of dominance; and (5) to nurture in ourselves and our students a passion for justice and the skills for social action.

Overall, there are five main goals identified within the literature on “MCE” (Sleeter and Grant, 2003, p. 156): (1) promoting the strength and value of cultural diversity, (2) promoting human rights and respect for those who are different from oneself, (3) promoting alternative life choices for people, (4) promoting social justice and equal opportunity for all people, and (5) promoting equity in the distribution of power among groups.

In this way, MCE aims at improving the learning and success of all students, particularly students from cultural groups that have been historically underrepresented or that suffer from lower educational achievement and attainment. While these may be the goals and dimensions of multicultural

education, its enactment in schools often falls short, usually because these goals and concepts become oversimplified. Therefore, having a clear understanding of how the principles of MCE might be robustly implemented through culturally responsive teaching practices throughout the school day is imperative if educators are to meet the goals of multicultural education.

Theoretical frameworks for multicultural education. In reviewing the literature on multicultural education, Jenks, Lee and Kanpol (2001) have assert three theoretical frameworks emerge viz conservative, liberal, and critical. Within these three frameworks, Jenks et al (2001) also cite examples from Sleeter and Grant’s descriptions of varying approaches to MCE, as well as James Banks’ work, to elaborate the descriptors of each framework. The characteristics of the three frameworks are shown in the following table:

Multiculturalism			
	Conservative	Liberal	Critical
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Schools assimilate students into mainstream culture ◆ Belief in meritocracy ◆ Same academic standards for all students ◆ Cultural differences need not play a role in achievement ◆ Measures of success are comparative and based in statistical measures ◆ Utilizes languages such as <i>success for all, inclusion, and empowerment</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acceptance and celebration of difference ◆ Ignores role of dominant culture ◆ Curricular content includes focus on global cultures, specific groups/ events (Japanese internment camps) and themes that focus on struggling against great odds ◆ Limited analysis of why inequities exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Knowledge is not value free ◆ Schools reinforce power relationships and social stratification of society ◆ Exposes the myth of meritocracy ◆ Histories and narratives of subordinate groups are a part of school curriculum
Approaches	Culturally different	Human relations	Single-group studies, Cultural pluralism, Social reconstructions
Sleeter & Grant			Transformative Social Action
Banks	Contribution & Additive	Contribution & Additive	Culturally responsive teaching

Source: Jenks, Lee & Kanpol (2001)

Gibson (1976) reviews multicultural education literature and identifies five approaches which are: (1) Education of the culturally different or benevolent multiculturalism. The purpose of multicultural education is to equalize educational opportunities for culturally different students. (2) Education about cultural differences or cultural understanding. The purpose of multicultural education is to teach students to value cultural differences, to understand the meaning of the culture concept, and to accept others' right to be different. (3) Education for cultural pluralism. The purpose of multicultural education is to preserve and to extend cultural pluralism in American society. (4) Bicultural education. The purpose of multicultural (or bicultural) education is to produce learners who have competencies in and can operate successfully in two different cultures. (5) Multicultural education as the normal human experience. A conceptualization of multicultural education is developed from the concepts themselves, rather than from existing or proposed school programmes. The programme proponents purport to be multicultural in quality or content.

Different points of views regarding multicultural education have broadened our horizons on this issue. Although there are many different approaches, definitions, statement of objectives, a major goal of multicultural education for all individuals and groups [involved in the multicultural movement], as Gay (2000) states, is basically to seek a more equitable and effective educational system for ethnically and culturally diverse students, and a more democratic society in which there is much greater equality, freedom, and justice in all spheres of life.

Components/Elements of Multicultural Education

One of the fundamental elements of an educational programme is undoubtedly the teachers themselves. As indicated by Costa (1997), the success of formal education is connected to the attitude and professional preparedness of the teacher himself. This increases the importance of the qualities of the teachers themselves and the multicultural elements found within and related to these qualities. Gay (1994) indicated that teachers in general perceived values, beliefs and events in standard terms, and taught with regard (principally) to what they knew themselves. As they did not understand the ethnic, social, racial or linguistic diversities of their students, they knowingly or unknowingly applied the wrong educational techniques in their classes. In order to allow the teacher to deliver effective education in multicultural classes, the teacher must be encouraged to employ cultural sensitivity strategies and ensure equality of opportunity so as to ensure the academic success and personal development of all students (Sharma, 2005).

Penny, Forney and Harlee (2000), have developed the following nine principles that should be followed so as to guarantee multicultural education:

- By way of using materials and approaches sensitive to students' socio-cultural backgrounds and experiences, students must be helped to raise their academic success in all areas.
- An essential part of multicultural education ought to be to allow the hearing of different voices.
- The verbal and non-verbal communication models of the teacher need to be analyzed continuously so as to raise the participation of students in their learning process.
- The learning styles of the students and the teaching styles of the teacher ought to be highlighted and used in order to develop the content and lesson design.
- Multicultural education should occupy a place in the formal educational program.
- Multicultural education should be a program that encompasses all levels.
- Multicultural education should teach students think critically so as to develop objective research and learning tools and allow them to ask questions freely.
- Multicultural education necessitates an understanding of the family culture of that community.
- Multicultural education should be evaluated as a source of benefit for the community.

Based on the previously discussed parameters, the author proposes six elements for implementing the concept of multicultural education in culturally diverse classrooms: cultural awareness, cultural relevance, culturally supportive environment, equitable access, instructional flexibility, and instructional integration. These elements are not exhaustive (including all possibilities) of good instructional practices for multicultural education use with diverse learners. Instead, they focus on key multicultural concepts that are supported by the literature on effective multicultural teaching. They also highlight the complexity of teaching in that they emphasize the need to combine a variety of elements in the multicultural classroom and, indeed, are in common with good educational practice.

- **Cultural Awareness.**The first element, cultural awareness, refers to instruction and learning activities that demonstrate support for differences in learning preferences, intelligences, and language. Cultural awareness requires cultural literacy and cultural competence. Cultural literacy is a knowledge and respect “of the history, traditions, and values of persons from diverse backgrounds” (D’Andrea, 1995, p. 46). Cultural literacy serves as a basis for teaching that builds on the child’s existing knowledge by incorporating his/her culture and language.
- **Cultural Relevance.**The second element, cultural relevance, must become an integral part of the curriculum and classroom activities (Abdal-Haqq, 1994). It goes beyond overt add-on activities, such as holiday celebrations, or special events and connects learning to children’s every day, real-life experiences. According to Ladson-Billings (1995b), “relevance refers to the ability of the curriculum to make deep and meaningful connections with the lives of the students” (p.333). Culturally relevant instruction uses the learners’ cultural backgrounds as a vehicle for learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Research suggests that building on the cultural knowledge that children bring with them may enhance learning (Gutierrez, 1992; Lee, 1992). Moreover, “children are more likely to learn material that stimulates their interest” (Montgomery & Rossi, 1994, p. 3).
- **A Culturally Supportive Environment.**It is a safe, accepting environment in which individuals genuinely respect all forms of diversity. A culturally supportive environment is inclusive; all voices are heard and equally valued. Divergence of opinions is accepted and encouraged. In addition, the culturally supportive environment demands and challenges students to learn, explore, and discover. There is an expectation for higher-level thinking and academic success for all students. Thus, in a culturally supportive classroom, children develop their individual abilities, skills, and potential. In short, the goal in culturally supportive classrooms is “to enrich students’ experiences, not to correct deficiencies” (Villegas, 1991, p. 26). Because the culturally supportive environment explicitly respects and accepts diversity, it welcomes the cultural community. The student’s family and culture are part of the learning experience.
- **Equitable Access.**The fourth element, equitable access, means that children use programmes that best meet their own needs. At the same time, equitable access means that all children use interactive methods in ways that engage them in higher-level thinking and productivity. Meeting individual needs through teaching learning

activities does not mean that less knowledgeable students or those with special learning needs should be relegated exclusively to drill and practice programmes. Though they may use and benefit from such programs, equitable access means that they also use other more challenging and interesting programmes.

- **Instructional Flexibility.**The fifth element, instructional flexibility, supports differences through varied modes of instructional delivery. The very diversity in our classrooms necessitates instructional flexibility (Villegas, 1991). Multi-modal teaching, in which the teacher provides for varied intelligences and learning style preferences, supports cultural and individual differences as well as expands children's repertoire of ways to learn. When the teacher provides alternative ways to learn, the child develops "a sense of what it means to be an expert because an expert is able to think about things in more than one way" (Steinberger, 1994, p. 28).
- Just as no one method of instruction can reach all learners, no one form of assessment can disclose every child's learning. Hence, instructional flexibility includes using varied assessments for diverse learners. To precisely assess student achievement, teachers need to "provide all students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills" (Lopez-Reyna & Bay, 1997, p. 36). Teachers who practice instructional flexibility in their classrooms give students choices in content, learning modes, and assessment methods (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).
- **Instructional integration.**The sixth element, instructional integration, refers to the degree to which technology becomes an integral part of classroom learning, student productivity, and information gathering for all learners across a variety of academic disciplines. They can be useful for their specific purpose, they limit creativity, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking.

The six elements for multicultural education presented here incorporate many of the practices identified in the multicultural literature as effective in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. Educational theory and sound pedagogical practices underlie the six elements presented here. The six multicultural elements include effective practices such as the incorporation of student language and culture, use of students' prior knowledge and experiences, support for a variety of learning styles and multiple intelligences, active student participation and interaction, implementation of cooperative learning, and respect for diversity of opinions.

Multicultural Education in Nepali Context

Nepal is a small country with diversities in terms of culture, ethnicity, languages and caste system. Schools are fundamental to a country's social system as a product of a society's status. Multicultural education is a strategic approach that addresses equal learning and reading environments for all children. But it can be argued that there are some fundamental lapses in the design of schooling in Nepal. One such lapse is the cultural gap – the mismatch between the schooling and its content and process on the one hand and the context of the local area and the people whom the schooling is supposed to support to develop on the other. In other words, the cultural gap is the gap between the values and worldviews, the knowledge tradition, and everyday practices of the people on the one hand and the values and the perspectives the schooling has been attempting to develop in the children on the other. While the people's values and worldviews are derived from their long knowledge traditions, livelihood, their obligations towards their nature, place, and society, the isomorphic (similarities in design, content, inputs, process, and outputs of educational systems) schooling has been promoting the globalized values that have little relevance to the needs and context of the local people. For this, schooling must be designed in accordance with the local cultural context and must respond to the needs of the local people.

To answer the third research question, after reading the literature and available resources related to the research questions, the following educational requirements or necessities were obtained.

- **Social realities in Nepali society.** Ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity are characteristics of the length of the society, and it is obvious. Existing this diversity should be the cornerstone of the unity of the people and it is not a factor for the separation and division. In other words, diversity should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat.
- **The necessity to respect the human dignity of all human beings.** Culture is what makes the success of the human species. Man creates culture and culture evolves man. By contributing to patterns of human behavior and the social environment makes his own acquired knowledge to modify the natural environment. Therefore, culture, demonstrates behavior that is common among people from generation to generation and country to country and it is transferable (Ahmdy, 2008). Culture in its broadest meaning is , knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs and language, in a word, the whole of human social life, etc. as the biology and life for all

people, respect, diversity of social needs of the modern world is also endorsed the Declaration of the World. It is one of the central ideas of multiculturalism policy or multiculturalism, according to human dignity. Taylor(2000), as one of the most influential experts in this field, in “the politics of multiculturalism, identity politics” to acknowledges this and acknowledges that emphasize the importance of multicultural education policy of multiculturalism in society and consequently in the educational system, it is emphasizing respect for human dignity.

- **The lack of multicultural education in the current educational system.** Since Nepalese society is a multicultural society, its educational system must be properly giving priority to multicultural education. But study of the current state of the educational system indicates that the current system lacks theoretical and philosophical framework in the field of multicultural education. In the educational sector, it is thought that culture has a powerful influence on student’s learning. Many aspects of the culture and identity of each individual in the learning and achievement of his self-concept affects the system of beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, social relations, the language which they used and the other person’s behavior becomes effective(Javadi, 2000).
- **Globalization & training requirements resulting from it.** One of the significant impacts of contemporary developments in the areas of economic, social and cultural rights, and put in place, this issue, is globalization. Globalization in various aspects of education is faced with serious challenges and changes, so that today the goals, contents, methods and types of educational relations are affected by this phenomenon and it has been inevitable. The relationship between educational systems and curriculum development specialists in different countries including Nepal, different approaches have been taken to develop its curriculum content. In order to preserve their traditional values and characteristics of the process of globalization has benefited from this state. It has been proven that the educational system needs to have a dynamic, efficient and of course comply with the new requirements needed today more than ever.
- **The necessity of multicultural education in terms of scientific perspective.** Multicultural education is a fundamental solution to eliminate gaps and preparation of various racial and ethnic groups to live in a democratic society, Students need to know that there are different cultures and different ethnicities how the economic, political and social foundations have role in society and contribute to their personal life (Gay, 2007).

- **The need for training familiar teacher with the educational system of Multicultural Education (Multicultural Education, neglected specialty of teachers).** The quality of teacher training and qualifications and skills is granted to educational officers in this system of education, Will determine what kind of policies and programmes that can be adopted or to what extent it is possible to change the traditional strategies and promising this approach (MehrMohammadi, 2000).Teacher training programs, especially resources, materials, manpower and knowledge base of multicultural education must provide the knowledge, which serves the needs of all students in multicultural education, and the students live in a society that has multiple cultures. In addition,to gain a deeper understanding of cultural groups and, recognize, in particular, cultural groups within the country they must understand their heritage and their value (Javadi , 2000). Teacher education programmes play an important role in shaping the attitudes and beliefs about the future teachers of these centers in the preparation of teachers of this type, a heavy responsibility to bear; Teachers who have the necessary skills to work with different cultural groups and to understand the importance of culture in the teaching-learning process.

Representative Measures

After reviewing the different literatures about the concept, components, and the necessities of multicultural education, the author have suggests thefollowing representative measures in which multicultural education can be developed.

- **Multicultural teaching content.** Texts and learning materials may include multiple cultural perspectives and references. For example, a lesson on inclusive education might address different cultural perspectives such as,caste, ethnicity, religion, language etc. Teachers and other educators may learn about the cultural backgrounds of students in a school, and then intentionally incorporate learning experiences and content relevant to their personal cultural perspectives and heritage. Students may also be encouraged to learn about the cultural backgrounds of other students in a class, and students from different cultures may be given opportunities to discuss and share their cultural experiences.
- **Prejudice reduction.** Educators may intentionally scrutinize learning materials to identify potentially prejudicial or biased material. Both educators and students might analyze their own cultural assumptions, and then discuss how learning materials, teaching practices, or schools policies reflect cultural bias, and how they could be changed to eliminate bias.

- **Resource allocation.** Multicultural education is generally predicated on the principle of equity—i.e., that the allocation and distribution of educational resources, programmes, and learning experiences should be based on need and fairness, rather than strict equality. For example, students who are not proficient in the English language may learn in bilingual settings and read bilingual texts, and they may receive comparatively more instructional support than their English-speaking peers so that they do not fall behind academically or drop out of school due to language limitations.
- **Curriculum design.** In teaching materials and learning experiences, the backgrounds and perspectives of previously excluded subcultures are increasingly being represented in school curriculum. In addition, learning standards—brief descriptions of what students are expected to learn and be able to do at particular ages and grade levels—are evolving to reflect greater cultural diversity. In addition, there are now educational programmes, such as ethnic and gender studies, that focus on specific cultural groups, and school learning experiences and social-justice programmes may also encourage students to investigate and address cultural bias in their school or community.
- **Culturally responsive instruction.** The way that educators teach is also changing to accommodate increasing diversity in public schools. For example, students with moderate disabilities and students who are not proficient in English are increasingly being moved into regular classes (rather than being taught in separate classes), where they may receive specialized assistance, but where they learn the same material as their peers. In the classroom, teachers may also employ “culturally responsive” instructional strategies (such as those described above) that reflect the cultural identity of individual students.
- **Teacher education.** Multicultural education has also affected the preparation of teachers. Multicultural education demands a school staff that is culturally competent, and to the greatest extent possible racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. Staff must be multiculturally sensitive and capable of including and embracing families and communities to create an environment that is supportive of multiple perspectives, experiences, and democracy.
- **Addressing legislative and legal issues.** The rise of multicultural education has also coincided with a number of legislative actions. Laws such as the Child Right, Women Right, Labor Right, Human right, Inclusive education, Education for All,

among many others, increased the visibility of multicultural education and led to the widespread adoption of more multicultural approaches to education in Nepalese community schools.

Conclusion

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning, based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, it is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing a curriculum that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices. The traditional goal of education is to get students to accept the dominant ideologies, directives and applications without questioning (Banks, 2004). However, the main goal of multicultural education is to train students for societal critical thinking and societal change and improve their decision making capabilities (Banks, 2004).

Multicultural perspective brings along a drastic change in education system and curriculum. The reform process at schools which prepare students for the future might serve as a tool for making a society fair and democratic. At the societal level, its major goals are to reduce prejudice and discrimination against oppressed groups, to work toward equal opportunity and social justice for all groups, and to effect an equitable distribution of power among members of different cultural groups (Sleeter & Grant, 2006).

Gorski (2010) states that the ultimate goal of multicultural education is to contribute to the establishment, application and maintenance of social justice and equality and thus ensure a social transformation. Teaching from a multicultural perspective means interrogating the social system from a critical and social justice standpoint (McLaren, 1995). This implies the need for providing pre-service and in-service teachers' opportunities to question their cultural, social, and philosophical perspectives and identities, so that they may develop the quality of mind necessary to work with and support the academic goals of students from diverse racial, cultural, socioeconomic, gender, and language backgrounds. A thorough attempt to understand multicultural education is necessary for teachers to be better equipped to face and/or tackle the challenges of multicultural classrooms, and thereby to be successful teachers in present day world.

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